
PHILIP DUSENBURY HOUSE

1871 SOUTH BAYSHORE DRIVE

Designation Report



City of Miami

REPORT OF THE CITY OF MIAMI
PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT
TO THE HISTORIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION BOARD
ON THE POTENTIAL DESIGNATION OF THE
PHILIP DUSENBURY HOUSE
AS A HISTORIC SITE

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Passed and
Adopted on May 21, 2002

Resolution No. HEPB-2002-25

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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Historic Name:

Philip Dusenbury House

Current Name:

Penson House

Location:

1871 South Bayshore Drive
Miami, Florida

Present Owner:

Mr. Robert S. Dunn, Guardian for
Alexandre Penson
225 Broadway, Ste 1401
New York, NY 10007

Present Use:

Residential

Zoning District:

R-1, with an SD-3 Overlay

Tax Folio Number:

01-4115-020-0090

Boundary Description:

Lots 11, 12, and 13 of Block 1 of the plat of CRYSTAL BLUFF, as recorded in Plat Book 6, at Page 141, of the Public Records of Dade County, Florida.

Classification:

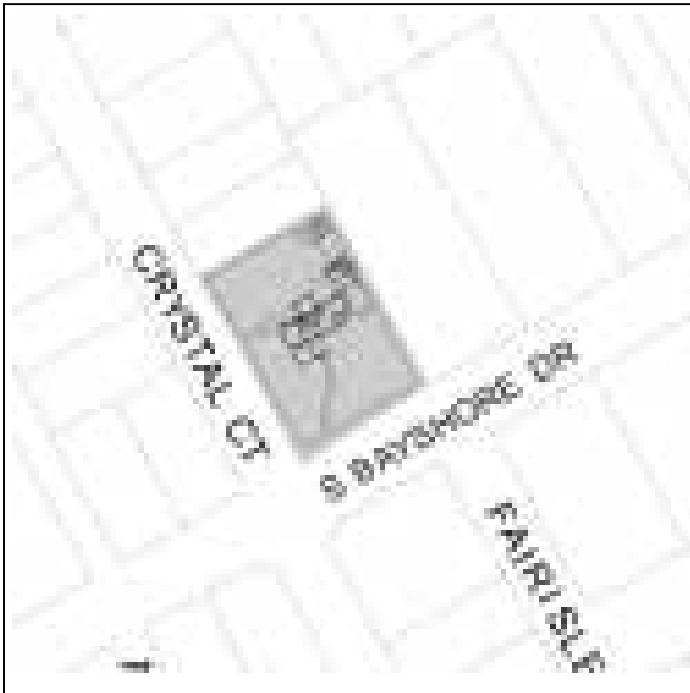
Historic Site

PHILIP DUSENBURY HOUSE

1871 SOUTH BAYSHORE DRIVE



location



site plan

II. SIGNIFICANCE

Specific Dates:

c. 1925

Architect:

Unknown

Builder/Contractor:

Unknown

Statement of Significance:

The Philip Dusenbury House is architecturally significant as an outstanding example of Mediterranean Revival style architecture and is particularly noteworthy for its design, details, materials, and craftsmanship, as reflected in its loggia, arched openings, and wrought iron grille work. The house is also historically significant as a reflection of the development trends in Coconut Grove during the early twentieth century.

The Philip Dusenbury House embodies those distinguishing characteristics of the Mediterranean Revival style including a low hipped roof, Spanish tiles, cornice, balconies at the south and east facades, and arched openings at the north, south, and east facades. The porte-cochere, located at the north side of the structure, includes arched and segmental openings. The entire structure is finished with exterior stucco, typical of the style.

The structure also contains elements of design, detail, and craftsmanship that represent an adaptation to the South Florida environment. These elements of design are identified through the loggia, tall openings, and wide overhangs. Elements representing excellence in craftsmanship are identified in the wrought iron grille work of the loggia, balconies and door openings. The chamfered wood post and lintel system of the room located above the loggia is also recognized for its excellent craftsmanship. Additionally, the original interior cement tile floor finish remains intact and undisturbed in the room above the loggia.

The Dusenbury House also reflects the development trends of Coconut Grove during the first two decades of the twentieth century when entrepreneurs from the Midwest built homes there. Traces of that era, when large houses lined the bluff along South Bayshore Drive, are rapidly disappearing. This house is therefore an important reminder of that period in the City's history.

Philip G. Dusenbury was a native of Michigan and visited Homestead to tend family owned citrus groves following World War I and time served in the military. During this time Dusenbury recognized opportunity in the future of the real estate market of Miami. He settled in Miami between 1918 and 1920 and began his career in the mortgage industry. Initially, while a manager in the mortgage department of G. L. Miller & Company, he and his wife Ethel built their first house at the intersection of Coacoochee and Tigertail Avenues. Later he became president of the Trust Company of Florida and built the house at 1871 South Bayshore Drive. After 1931 he built a third house at South Bayshore Lane.

Philip Dusenbury was a member of various community organizations including the Miami Civitans, American Legion, and the Rotary Club. He died in 1969 at his summer home in Tryon, North Carolina and is survived by his daughter Jane Dusenbury Calberson and four grandchildren.

Relationship to Criteria for Designation:

As stated above, the Philip Dusenbury House has significance in the historical and architectural heritage of the City of Miami; possesses integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association; and is eligible for designation under the following criteria:

3. Exemplify the historical, cultural, political, economical, or social trends of the community.

The Philip Dusenbury House reflects the historical development trends of Coconut Grove during the early twentieth century when entrepreneurs from the Midwest built homes along South Bayshore Drive.

5. Embody those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, period, or method of construction.

The Dusenbury House is significant as an outstanding example of the Mediterranean Revival style and is particularly noteworthy for its loggia, arched openings, and wrought iron grille work.

7. Contain elements of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship of outstanding quality or which represent a significant innovation or adaptation to the South Florida environment.

The Dusenbury House is particularly noteworthy for the excellence of its craftsmanship and detailing, embodied in such features as its arched opening details, wrought iron grille work, and its chamfered wood post and lintel system. Its loggia, wide overhangs, and tall openings represent a significant residential adaptation to the area's climate.

III. DESCRIPTION

Present and Original Appearance:

Setting:

The Philip Dusenbury House consists of three structures: the main house, an auto house, and storage shed. The main house and auto house were built c. 1925; the date of the storage shed is unknown. The size of the original rectangular lot remains today as it was first recorded in 1924, approximately 125 feet in width and 190 feet in length. It is comprised of three lots from the original Crystal Court subdivision. One lot faces Crystal Court, with the other two facing South Bayshore Drive.

Facing southeast, the main house is set back approximately 69 feet from South Bayshore Drive and is elevated on the natural limestone bluff overlooking Biscayne Bay. There is a paved walk leading from South Bayshore Drive to a tiled area immediately adjacent to a loggia. A paved driveway leads from Crystal Court to a porte-cochere and continues east to the auto house. To the north of the auto house is a one-story storage shed. The mature vegetation of the grounds includes tropical and hardwood trees.

There are two walls located on the property. One wall extends along the rear (north) of the property. The other extends north from South Bayshore Drive approximately 85 feet terminating at an informal outdoor area east of the main house. The western and southern property boundaries include a green hedge of varying height and a chain link fence.

Main House:

The Dusenbury House is an L-shaped, two-story structure. The roof is hipped with Spanish tiles. Exposed jig-cut rafters are visible under the deep eaves. The house rests on a concrete foundation with an opening to access the four-foot crawl space. The walls are concrete block with stucco finish.

The main façade faces southeast. A major element of this façade is a one-story loggia, comprised of tall arched openings and cast stone columns, that serves as the entrance of the house from South Bayshore Drive. Directly above this loggia is a second story detailed with a wood post and lintel fenestration. The loggia openings were originally screened, rather than the current glazing. Window openings vary in size, although all consist of casement type windows containing two, six, or eight lights. Openings are typically grouped in threes, although some are paired or placed singly. Door openings are treated with ten-light, single and paired French doors. There is a wrought iron balcony leading from a second story exterior door behind a metal grille. The eave of the roof accommodates the

overhang of the balcony. Extensions of the structural wall, facing southeast, are detailed to resemble buttresses.

A port-cochere extends from the north façade. It is a two-story square rectangular structure, constructed of concrete block, covered with stucco, and has a hipped roof with Spanish tiles. The first level consists of parking area for a single car. Segmental arches are located on the east and west facades. Circular arches are located on the north façade. Casement windows with eight lights are found on the second floor. The second level is accessible by a stair located in the main house. The second floor consists of a 13' by 18' domestic room. Extensions of the structural walls facing east and are detailed to resemble buttresses.

The north elevation also features an exterior chimney, constructed of concrete block and surfaced with stucco.

The west façade contains many of the same features of the as the main façade facing southeast. This includes the tall arched openings of the loggia, with cast stone columns, and the post and lintel detailed fenestration of the second story. Window openings vary in size; however, all have been treated with two and eight lights, grouped in threes, paired, or placed singly. There is a wrought iron balcony leading from a second story exterior door behind a metal grille. The eave, as on the main façade, accommodates the overhang of the balcony.

The main house was enlarged in 1992 by the addition of a one-story domestic room at the north east corner of the house. The roof is hipped with Spanish tiles. Window openings are casement type. There is a single door opening located on the east façade, and it is treated with a solid wood door behind a metal grille from the original installation. The original terrace of the second level was roofed over in a manner consistent with the main roof. Despite these additions and alterations, the architectural integrity of the house remains intact.

Auto Garage:

This two-story, square building is located to the east and rear of the main house. It is constructed of concrete block, covered with stucco, and has a flat roof. The first floor consists of a single car garage and utility room. The garage is accessed by double swinging wood doors located on the west elevation. The utility room is accessed by a solid wood door also located on the west elevation. Double hung windows are found on the second floor. A stair providing access to the second floor is located on the north side of the building. A second story was added to the auto house between 1925 and 1937.

Storage Shed:

This one-story structure is located to the north of the auto garage. It is constructed of concrete block, covered with stucco, and has a flat roof. The shed is accessed by a solid wood door on the south elevation, and has double hung windows. The

shed houses a narrow rectangular concrete pad that supports a water pump powered by electricity.

Contributing Structures and/or Landscape Features:

Contributing structures within the site include the main house and auto garage as described above. Contributing landscape features include all specimen trees located on the site.



Philip Dusenbury House
1871 South Bayshore Drive
Southwest and southeast (front) facades
2001



Philip Dusenbury House
1871 South Bayshore Drive
Southwest and southeast (front) facades
c. 1925

IV. PLANNING CONTEXT

Present Trends and Conditions:

The Philip Dusenbury House is located on the bluff along South Bayshore Drive in an area where many of the original historic houses are disappearing. The current owner of the house is committed to its preservation and is requesting historic site designation from the City.

The Dusenbury House requires significant repair primarily due to the general lack of proper maintenance over time and various owners. Recognizing this, the current owner has recently contracted a historic preservation consultant and architect to develop preservation planning strategies. This includes a complete restoration of the main house and a future addition. These efforts will follow guidelines established by the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Structures*.

The consultant has engaged officers from the City of Miami and Miami-Dade County for guidance on resources related to documentation of the property and procedures for acquiring local designation status. The architect is currently in the schematic design phase involving the mentioned restoration and addition.

Preservation Incentives:

The preservation of the remaining historic homes on South Bayshore Drive should be a preservation priority, and the City should be prepared to work with property owners in identifying solutions to retain these properties.

One available incentive for substantial rehabilitation projects is the property tax abatement program currently available in Miami-Dade County. It is hoped that the City will adopt a similar program in the future.

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